

VT Early Childhood Professional Development System (ECPDS) Application

Frequently Asked Questions

System Components and Requirement Elements Questions

There is more than VACCRRRA in Component B. I think that the VSAVT (\$15K), VAEYC(\$?), Center for the Book (\$50K?) and CDD Tuition (\$?) are in component B but that has never been clarified.

The professional development activities that are currently supported by the funds dedicated to the transformed VT ECPDS are detailed on the CDD website at.

http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/CDD/Proposed/DP_Transformation_Funding.pdf

It is critical for applicants to understand that there is no direct correspondence between these current activities and amounts and what is expected in a successful application. The Application for Initial Funding document clearly describes the System Components, Required Elements, Priorities and Selection Criteria that are necessary to consider and include in a successful and responsive application. The Department seeks a transformed system built on expanding the success of the current system while carefully considering the scientific research related to professional development and practice improvement, and by intentionally creating a streamlined and coordinated system that improves efficiency and accountability and achieves economies of scale to provide an excellent, effective and robust service delivery system – a true transformation.

[Regarding] Component B elements: What are the activities expected under "overseeing regionally coordinated M.A.T.C.H activities".

Please refer to the definition of M.A.T.C.H. on page 14 and Element h. (M.A.T.C.H. Professional)

Approval and Registry) in Section 2. Additional information is provided on the Northern Lights CDC website at <http://northernlightscdc.org/your-role/match-consultants/>. M.A.T.C.H. is a term

coined in Vermont to describe relationship-based professional development opportunities such as mentoring, advising, teaching, coaching, and consultation.

Emerging evidence in the field indicates that the attainment of new knowledge through training and education activities is most effectively translated into improved practice when paired with relationship-based activities. A successful application will incorporate the foundational work done in Vermont over the past 10 years related to M.A.T.C.H. and describe how relationship-based professional development opportunities such as mentoring, advising, teaching, coaching, and consultation will be intentionally and systemically incorporated into RDPO across the state.

Is the money for the small grants included in the bundle or component A and component B?

They are included in component B. There is a pot of money for the entire projection. There is not necessarily a connection between the current grants and the application for this system. The applications for A only should be not more than \$400,000 and component B only should be no more than \$1,000,000. This is an expectation that the specialized providers that provide specific training are integrated into regional partners.

It is called ECPDS, is afterschool services and regulated afterschool programs to be served by this system?

This system serves early childhood and afterschool programs. There is a separate grant to Vermont Afterschool who also work with afterschool programs. It is important that applicants of the system address how they will partner with organizations like Vermont Afterschool.

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It does not appear so, but does this grant cover any college classwork that leads to degree or credentials?

It could, it depends on the design proposed. There is money included in the budget that is currently

used for college courses, that could be part of the future system.

Selection Criteria Questions

May For-Profit businesses apply?

Yes; however, the budget instructions and the application instructions make it clear that this design is not intended to be a profit making business. Any fees that are charged must be reinvested into the system.

Is there any organizational structure of an applicant that would not be accepted?

It is difficult to answer this question. Any structure that does not conform to the application

requirements will not be accepted. The definitions in the instructions are important to the understand the acceptable organizational structures.

On page 19 of the application instructions you reference small CDD grants - which ones and what is the expectation and responsibility?

Named in the application the specialized partners (page 16, in section 5). There are a number of specialized professional development partners and those have been named.

Application Process and Instructions Questions

What is the maximum file size?

10 GB maximum for the entire application, recommend only 1 or 2 GB total file size for application.

Can you provide links to materials within the application or should you provide all information as attachments, etc. directly integrated into the application?

Hyperlinks are not permitted in the application. Materials should be uploaded in the application as requested in the application format. Reviewers will not look at websites or other documents outside of the applications.

Do you want letters of intent?

No, we do not need letters of intent.

Application Requirements Questions

[Regarding] System Design Section: Component D items j. and m. (page 12 of RFP) Could you please describe the existing programs these items refer to? [j. Financial Supports including college tuition and training supports and assistance with fees for CDA, Peer Review, and Accreditation processes m. Quality improvement and

professional development support for all programs and professionals]

System Design Section: This question involves the funding of tuition assistance. Is this money currently within the existing \$1.44MM in funding? If so, where? If not, is CDD's

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expectation that these funds will be derived from service efficiencies or other means?

The transformation of ECPDS is not intended to replicate current activity. As articulated in the cover letter and introduction, the opportunity afforded by the application process is clearly aspirational and intended to “close the gap between what we know about adult learning and professional growth and what we do to envision and commit to an ECPDS in Vermont that ‘improves the quality of professional practice, the quality of the practice environment [programs], and the status and well-being of the workforce and ultimately, outcomes for children’.

That said, currently:

- Financial supports for college tuition grants of up to \$1,000 per course with college credit related to early childhood education per individual per year;
- CDA Assessment Fee grants of up to \$425 each to support the CDA application;
- Support for Agency of Education Peer Review process for Teacher Licensure of up to \$500 each for an early childhood or early childhood special education endorsement; and
- Financial support for NAEYC or NAFCC Accreditation application in accord to the current fee schedules

are available to the field from CDD through an application process – details of current supports may be examined on the CDD website at

<http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/providers/grants/pd>

The budgeted funds for these activities, supported with CCDF quality funds, which varies slightly from year to year, have been included in the funds available for this application. Applicants must continue to include these supports as part of the coordinated VT ECPDS but are not required to exactly replicate current practice.

Priority 6 in Section 6 (p18) articulates a clear emphasis on RPDO and supports that promote individuals in the field advancing along and intentional career ladder by earning certificates, credentials and degrees through access to CEUs and/or credit bearing course work. This is based on clear evidence in the research that indicates that educational achievement of practitioners has a clear and positive impact on improved practice and child outcomes. This has been a priority of CDD articulated in the CCDF State Plan over the past several years but it has been difficult to increase investments in tuition assistance as we are spending all of the CCDF quality funds available to us. We believe that the funds available in this application provide an opportunity to shift investments and look forward to applications that take a fresh look at how funds are used to address this and other priorities identified in the application document.

My understanding, which I hope is correct, is that current CDD evaluation of professional development is limited to the collection of activity logs from Resource Development Specialists and training-related satisfaction surveys plus monitoring of a small number of quality indicators (such as an increase in the number of providers participating in VT STARS). What are CDD’s expectations regarding the robustness of the ECPDS evaluation? Is CDD anticipating something comparably limited? If CDD is anticipating something more robust, how robust? A concern, of course, is that with no new funding available, a rigorous (and thus expensive) evaluation could impact the funding available for the delivery of services.

One purpose of the transformation of Vermont’s ECPDS is to ensure accountability for professional development investments supported by CCDF. It is expected that the applicant present a thoughtful and significant improvement on current limited accountability measures. It is expected that the transformed system is designed to collect and

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utilize data to measure the impact of activities on outcomes for the workforce. Consistent with Result 5 in [Vermont's Early Childhood Framework and Action Plan: How Do We Know if We're Making a Difference](#) selection criteria in section 5 of the Application Instructions includes accountability. A successful application will include a detailed description of how progress toward desired results for the workforce, identified in Section 1 (pages 8-9) will be measured and reported. This is consistent with the National Research Council *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through 8: A Unifying Foundation* recommendations around accountability and the recommendations of Vermont's ad hoc Visioning Work Group. The Work Group emphasized both accountability and robust on-going evaluation. A third party evaluation, such as that conducted by JSI Training and Research Institute supported by the PPD Committee in 2011 is required and described on page 18. It is believed that intentional economies of scale achieved through coordination and planning will support accountability as part of an effective and robust service delivery system as well as on-going evaluation.

Can you post the funding sources for this opportunity, and the grantees who received those funds last year?

This chart outlines the funding sources for this opportunity and the grantee groups who received the funds in State Fiscal Year 2016:

http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/CDD/Proposed/PPD_Transformation_Funding.pdf

I'm wondering if applications that include institutions outside of the state that may serve in-state PD, will be considered. For instance: if PD is designed to occur through a New Hampshire university but could be offered in-state.

There is not restriction for institutions outside of the state, there are points in the application for experience and knowledge of Vermont's system

which may require more research for organizations outside of the state, however they are welcome to apply.

What is the plan for annual increased funding to keep track with annual expense increases the budgeted amounts in the application are for all three years total?

At this point in time there are no annual increases in CCDBG, which means that there is no plan to increase funding. An applicant can look at the pot of money for three years, it is a possibility to propose a lower amount in the first year, and increase the amounts over the three years as long it does not exceed the amount available each year.

What is the Source of Funds for this opportunity?

Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) which is entirely federal funds with state and federal restrictions on spending and reporting.

On page 18 of the application instructions there is a references to a 3rd party evaluator. Can you expand on that?

The JSI evaluation that happened in 2011, and was an effort of the Professional Preparation and Development Committee of Building Bright Futures. It was a look at what was working and what wasn't working in Vermont's early childhood and afterschool professional development system. This evaluation was designed on the building blocks of the system at that time. That was a third party evaluation of the system at the time. This means that an organization separate from the applicant would be able to design with the applicant and the division an evaluation of the designed system. At the very least there is an expectation that the application sets money aside for this evaluation by a third party that will have results presented to the division. An application could have a partner identified for this purpose, however it is not necessary to identify who is doing

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the evaluation in the proposal, only that there is a plan and budget to do the evaluation.

Regarding the Timeline--What happens to services between January and March?

There may be some down time as the new system ramps up. Applicants are asked to address a transition plan for this purpose. The division will try to make a decision quickly on applications, depending on the quality of the application, which will support this transition time.

Questions on the Application Attachments

Attachment II - Number of Individuals working in Regulated Child Care Programs in Vermont as of 5.31.2016: The note under the chart says that this data is from the BFIS Quality Credential Education Extract. How is this data collected? How complete is the data? How were the numbers in the chart calculated?

Each person employed at a regulated child care program is required to complete a background check authorization form as part of the licensing process. This information is entered into the Bright Futures Information System by CDD licensing staff. This allows the data to be extracted from Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) through a monthly extract called the "BFIS Quality Credential Education Extract." This data is complete for all individuals working in regulated programs that have completed background check authorization forms. The charts showing the number of individuals is an unduplicated count of individuals working in regulated care in Vermont. If an individual appears as employed at multiple programs they are only counted once. Regulated programs include Registered and Licensed Family Child Care Homes, Center Based Child Care and Preschool Programs, and Afterschool Programs that are the client group intended to be served

through the VT ECPDS. The data does not include those individuals that do not work in a regulated program, or have not completed a background check authorization form

The data on number of trainings verified is a duplicated count of individuals - the individual was counted for each training attended.

Could you provide a list of webinar attendees with contact information and agency affiliation? (To enable some partnering if that makes sense)

List of webinar participants that are willing for the division to share their information:

- Scott Johnson, VACCRRRA, sjohnson@lamoillefamilycenter.org
- Margaret Atkinson, Windham Child Care Association, margaret@windhamchildcare.org
- Holly Morehouse, Vermont Afterschool, hollymorehouse@vermontafterschool.org
- John Cipora, Springfield College, jcipora@springfieldcollege.edu
- Sonja Raymond, VAEYC, sonja.raymond@vaeyc.org